

TO: All MUNFA Members
FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee
DATE: August 24, 2021
SUBJECT: Update on the Impacts of the Pandemic

On Friday, August 20, Memorial University [announced the reinstatement of a mask mandate, and the introduction of a vaccine mandate for the fall semester](#). Further details were released on Newline on August 23, 2021, indicating that students, faculty, staff, and visitors will require the first dose of an approved vaccination by September 7, 2021, and the second dose by October 15, 2021, unless granted an accommodation. Details on the accommodation and enforcement process are being finalized by the administration and will be communicated as soon as possible.

These measures are an important step to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community are better protected when we return to in-person teaching. MUNFA will continue to advocate for a more assertive vaccination campaign, with increased information in high-traffic, online areas for students, accessible vaccination clinics on campus, and clear guidelines communicated to International students coming to Memorial, particularly those who do not have MCP coverage. As we await details on the implementation of the vaccine mandate, we wished to provide an update on other COVID-19 related concerns.

Ventilation on Memorial University Campuses

On July 28, 2021, MUNFA was informed by the administration that Memorial University had recently conducted a full audit of all teaching and learning spaces to ensure that ventilation is adequate in order to minimize the risks of COVID-19. At that time, we were informed that the audit indicated these spaces meet or exceed best practices for ventilation requirements. After repeated requests, on August 20, 2021, MUNFA was provided with [a copy of the audit \(Appendix A as an Excel File\)](#). We are aware that the audit provided is only an assessment of ventilation at the St. John's and Signal Hill Campuses and have requested documentation regarding Memorial's other campuses.

Upon initial inspection, we are concerned at the simplistic assessment of ventilation on campus, and we encourage ASMs, particularly those with expertise in this area, to let us know your thoughts (munfa@mun.ca).

Pandemic Impacts on Promotion & Tenure (P&T)

As noted in our [Information Bulletin of May 14, 2021](#) the Parties signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) to extend all P&T deadlines in the Collective Agreement, except Clause 11.11, by twenty business days for the 2021-22 Academic Year. For a list of all dates, please review our revised calendars:

- [Promotion & Tenure Calendar for Faculty Members](#)
- [Promotion & Tenure Calendar for Librarians](#)

Additionally, MUNFA continues to push the administration to formally acknowledge the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our members, specifically as it relates to the P&T process. We are aware

that other Canadian institutions have introduced language in their letters to external referees reminding reviewers of how the pandemic may have negatively impacted all aspects of an academic's work. As such MUNFA requested that Memorial's administration follow suit. We have emailed Faculty Relations and ask that they include the following language:

The COVID-19 Pandemic significantly disrupted academic staff members' ability to perform their duties and responsibilities, including teaching, research/scholarly activities, and academic service. The COVID-19 Pandemic resulted in months of campus access restrictions, including the inability to access research labs and other spaces used for scholarship and creative work. The Pandemic significantly increased workloads as academic staff members were required to pivot quickly to remote teaching delivery in the Spring of 2020 and to cancel or rapidly modify planned research and projects. Many academic staff members also faced personal and family circumstances that created additional challenges.

Unfortunately, at this time the administration has not agreed to include our proposal and instead has countered with the following suggested language:

Referee letters for supporting Tenure:

Please note that Clause 11.29 (Criteria for Tenure) outlines that access to research facilities and other available infrastructure shall be considered when granting tenure. The COVID-19 Pandemic significantly disrupted academic staff members' ability to conduct their research.

Referee letters for supporting Promotion:

Please note that Clause 12.13 (Criteria for Promotion) outlines that access to research facilities and other available infrastructure shall be considered when granting promotion. The COVID-19 Pandemic significantly disrupted academic staff members' ability to conduct their research.

The MUNFA Executive feels this language fails to address the full impacts the pandemic has had, and is having, on ASMs. We will continue to press the administration to adopt language similar to our initial proposal and welcome your feedback on this matter.

We once again encourage ASMs with concerns/suggestions/feedback relating to the return to in-person teaching to communicate them directly to your Administrative Head and to copy the MUNFA Office, munfa@mun.ca.